



## **WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL**

**Project ID:** 2002ID5B

**Title:** Community Directed Water Protection Strategy: Focus Communities in Northcentral Idaho, including the Nezperce Indian Tribe

**Project Type:** Research

**Focus Categories:** Management and Planning, Non Point Pollution, Water Quality

**Keywords:** Land Use, Geographic Information, Indian Water Issues

**Start Date:** 03/01/2002

**End Date:** 02/28/2003

**Federal Funds Requested:** \$10,100

**Non-Federal Matching Funds Requested:** \$20,218

**Congressional District:** 1

**Principal Investigator:**

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**Abstract**

Water source protection, especially in rural and agricultural places necessarily involves land use decisions. Many costly initiatives and programs have been developed to protect drinking water, yet there exists no easy format for land users and community members to access this information in a way that is easily usable. This is particularly important in a demographically complex area such as the Clearwater Plateau in northcentral Idaho, which includes the Nez Perce Indian Reservation. Surface and groundwater sources cut across jurisdictional boundaries - complicating protection efforts. The majority of land use on the Clearwater Plateau is agricultural. Non-point source water quality problems such as high nitrate levels in both surface waters and in at least one deep aquifer (Bentz, 1998, and Crockett, 1995) on the Clearwater Plateau have driven the need for Federally mandated programs such as Total Maximum Daily Load development and Sourcewater Assessments. While the goals are challenging, there is not an abundance of funding, especially for implementation of groundwater protection (following the completed Sourcewater Assessments).

Hydrologically, significant reaches of Lapwai Creek and the Clearwater River are believed to recharge the Columbia River Basalts, a fractured formation that allows surface/groundwater interaction. Linkage of existing information and efforts such as TMDLs and sourcewater assessments is especially important in this area. The actual implementation by private land users and communities of drinking water protection plans is voluntary in Idaho. There is a widely recognized need to find ways to involve the land user groups and communities in a way that is voluntary and successful, and utilizes links to land and resource managing and data generating entities.